

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A performance apparatus comprising:
 - a plurality of sounding elements capable of generating sound;
 - at least one sounding element driving member;
 - at least one sounding element driving part provided on said sounding element driving member, for performing a sounding operation of coming into contact with any of said sounding elements to cause said sounding element to generate sound;
 - an actuator engageable with said sounding element driving member, for driving said sounding element driving member; and
 - at least first cushioning member provided on at least one of said actuator and said sounding element driving member, for absorbing an impact occurring when said actuator comes into engagement with said sounding element driving member.

2. (Original) A performance apparatus according to claim 1, comprising
 - at least one second cushioning member provided in proximity to said sounding element driving part of said sounding element driving member; and
 - wherein said second cushioning member is disposed to come into contact with any of said sounding elements immediately before said sounding element driving part comes into contact with said sounding element, for forcibly damping residual vibrations of said sounding element; and
 - said second cushioning member is further disposed to come into contact with said actuator when said actuator is engaged with said sounding element driving

member, for absorbing an impact caused by engagement between said actuator and said sounding element driving member.

3. (Original) A performance apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said actuator is capable of making a reciprocating motion, for driving said sounding element driving member during a forward stroke of the reciprocating motion; and

wherein the performance apparatus further comprises at least one upper limit stopper and at least one lower limit stopper that are disposed to come into contact with said actuator to determine an upper limit position and a lower limit position, respectively, of said actuator, said upper limit stopper and said lower limit stopper comprising at least one third cushioning member and at least one fourth cushioning member, respectively, for absorbing an impact occurring when said upper limit stopper and said lower limit stopper come into contact with said actuator.

4. (Currently Amended) A performance apparatus comprising:
a plurality of sounding elements capable of generating sound;
at least one sounding element driving member;
at least one sounding element driving part provided on said sounding element driving member, for performing a sounding operation of coming into contact with any of said sounding elements to cause said sounding element to generate sound;
an actuator engageable with said sounding element driving member, for driving said sounding element driving member;
a base part; and

at least one first braking member fixedly provided on said base part in proximity to said sounding element driving member, said first braking member being engageable with said sounding element driving member, for suppressing a motion of said sounding element driving member by causing said sounding element driving part to slide therein to reduce mechanical noise of the sounding element driving member.

5. (Original) A performance apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said first braking member is disposed to engage with said sounding element driving member at least before said actuator and said sounding element driving member come into engagement with each other, for decreasing a speed of said sounding element driving member when said actuator and said sounding element driving member come into engagement with each other.

6. (Original) A performance apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said sounding element driving member is capable of being rotatively driven, said sounding element driving part of said sounding element driving member being provided on said sounding element driving member in proximity to an outer periphery thereof.

7. (Original) A performance apparatus according to claim 6, wherein:
said actuator is capable of making a reciprocating motion, for engagement with said sounding element driving member during a forward stroke of the reciprocating motion to thereby rotate said sounding element driving member in a predetermined direction;

the performance apparatus further comprises at least one cam mechanism comprising at least one cam part having a plurality of cam surfaces and fixedly

provided on said sounding element driving member, and at least one urging member that constantly urges said cam part;

said cam mechanism being disposed such that said urging member departs from and comes into contact with the cam surfaces of said cam part in response to rotation of said sounding element driving member, for applying a bias force to said sounding element driving member only in the predetermined direction immediately after a sounding operation; and

the performance apparatus further comprises at least one fifth cushioning member provided on at least one of said urging member and the cam surfaces of said cam part of said cam mechanism, for absorbing an impact occurring when said urging member and each of the cam surfaces of said cam part come into contact with each other.

8. (Original) A performance apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising at least one second braking member provided in proximity to said sounding element driving member, said second braking member being engageable with said sounding element driving member at least before said urging member and each of the cam surfaces of said cam part of said cam mechanism come into contact with each other, for decreasing a speed of said sounding element driving member when said urging member and the cam surface of said cam part come into contact with each other.

9. (New) A performance apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said first braking member has a groove formed therein, and wherein a width of the groove is set to be slightly smaller than that of said sounding element driving part.

10. (New) A performance apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said first braking member brakes the motion of said sounding element driving member in a manner such that said sounding element driving part is engaged with the groove slide therein.